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RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J-3/J-5// PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC//USDP:PDUSDP/ISA:EUR/ISA:NESA/DSCA// PRIORITY
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DEPT. FOR EUR/SE AND NEA/I

SUBJECT: TURKEY PURSUES DIPLOMACY, POISED FOR MILITARY ACTION

■ B. ANKARA 2641

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11. (C) SUMMARY: The GOT continues to pursue diplomacy to pressure Iraqi and Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) officials, as well as the U.S., to take concrete steps to root out the PKK presence inside northern Iraq. However, Turkey remains poised to conduct a cross border operation (CBO) at any time. A GOI delegation arrived in Ankara late October 25 to discuss options for possible bilateral cooperation against the PKK. Separate talks are taking place early October 26 between intelligence chiefs, as well as between the GOT Minister of Interior and GOI Ministers of Defense and National Security. A working lunch involving representatives of the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) and the KRG, as well as Embassy Baghdad and U.S. military representatives, will take place mid-afternoon 10/26. Responding to Turkey's National Security Council recommendation to consider economic sanctions on the KRG, the GOT formed a committee October 25 to devise options. Press reports say the eight Turkish soldiers held hostage by the PKK since October 21 could be released, but are unconfirmed. A Turkish military source tell us they have not conducted flights over Iraqi territory in recent days, contrary to widespread press reporting. They will notify us if such operations are planned. While large protests against terrorism continue across the country, there have been only a

few small demonstrations at mission facilities, with Turkish police responding quickly to provide additional security as necessary. END SUMMARY

GOI Delegation Arrives in Ankara

12. (C) An Iraqi delegation arrived in Ankara late October 25 to discuss possible options for bilateral cooperation against the PKK. Led by Defense Minister Jasim Ubeydi, other members include National Security Minister al-Wa'ili, Deputy Interior Minister Major General Ayden Halit Kadir, and Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Labeed Abbawi, as well as KRG Minister Imad Ahmed, KDP foreign policy advisor Safeen Dizayee, U.S. Major General Michael Barbero, and Embassy Baghdad POLMIL Minister-Counselor Marcie Ries, all of whom are participating as PM Maliki's special representatives.

13. (C) Turkey's Coordinator for Iraq Celikkol told the Ambassador on October 25 (ref A) that the GOT would not accept representatives of Iraqi Kurdish political parties nor of the KRG in bilateral security discussions. Celikkol said the GOT views this as yet another attempt on the part of the Iraqis to compel Turkish recognition of the KRG. Separate talks are taking place today between intelligence chiefs as well as between the GOT Minister of Interior and GOI Ministers of Defense and National Security. However, the MFA is hosting a working lunch for the entire delegation, including KDP and KRG officials, this afternoon.

Erdogan, Gul Voice Impatience

14. (SBU) During his state visit to Romania, Erodgan told the press that the GOT will not be influenced by U.S. concerns when deciding whether to launch a CBO. He said that Turkey has briefed the neighboring countries on the issue and "if they do not fulfill our requirements, we will be obliged to do it by ourselves." In Ankara, President Gul, during opening remarks to the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) Ministerial, stated that Turkey had run out of patience and was "determined to take all necessary steps to end this threat." According to press accounts, Serbian Foreign

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Minister Vuk Jeremic voiced support for the GOT's policies toward the PKK. Greek Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyannis, speaking to journalists on the margins, condemned the PKK's terrorist attacks and encouraged the GOT to resolve the problem through cooperation with Iraq. Also attending the ministerial, DAS Matt Bryza remarked to journalists that the U.S. was working for the release of the Turkish hostages held by the PKK, adding, "We will deliver on those promises."

GOT Establishes Committee to Examine Economic Sanctions

15. (SBU) On October 25, the GOT directed all ministries and institutions dealing with the economy to start preparations for a possible embargo of Iraq, or at least the Kurdish Region in northern Iraq. A committee composed of Deputy PM Nazim Ekren, who will head the group, and representatives from the Finance and Industry Ministries as well as Treasury, Foreign Trade, Customs, and the State Planning Organization will draft options for possible economic sanctions. The committee, which may meet over the weekend, will present its recommendations to the Cabinet before PM Erdogan makes a final decision on implementation. Media speculate that shutting down Habur gate will not be on the agenda, although passage of traffic through Habur could be slowed. Regardless, customs controls will likely become much stricter.

Turkish Military Denies Turkish Jets Crossed Entered Iraq

¶6. (C) According to DAO reporting, Turkish Special Forces Brigade HQ Silopi Commander Brigadier General Celiken said that the Turkish military has flown no fixed or rotary wing aircraft into Iraqi airspace in recent days, contrary to extensive reports of such activity in the Turkish press. Celiken did, however, indicate that Turkish aircraft are "operating along the border." Celiken indicated that Turkey would notify U.S. authorities prior to any Turkish aircraft entering Iraqi airspace in order to avoid any confrontation with U.S. forces. Celiken may or may not be telling the whole truth. The GOT and Turkish military continue to benefit from continued reporting in the Turkish and international press that attacks inside Iraq are taking place. This demonstrates to the Turkish public that military retaliation is taking place, and telegraphs to Iraqi and KRG authorities that the threat of Turkish military action is real.

Efforts to Recover Hostages Ongoing

¶7. (S/NF) While the Turkish military continues to carry out operations focused on locating and recovering the eight soldiers taken hostage by the PKK, several behind-the-scenes initiatives are ongoing in an effort to secure their release. The PKK released information stating that the kidnapped troops are in the "guerrilla area" in "northern Kurdistan" (SE Turkey) and will not be allowed to meet with any delegations due to security concerns. The PKK message claims the soldiers are in good health. There are press reports that mediation pursued through an Erbil-based group called the International Tolerance Organization has succeeded in convincing the PKK to release the soldiers; however, we have no confirmation of this.

Demonstrations Continue Nationwide

¶8. (SBU) Demonstrations against the PKK continue throughout the country. According to media accounts, numbers reached 30,000 in Malatya, 20,000 in Van, 30,000 in Mugla, 10,000 in

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Birecik and Ayvalik, 5,000 in Antalya, 3,000 in Kangal and Bodrum, and 2,000 in Sindirgi and Mengen. In Van, protesters carried signs reading "Turks and Kurds are brothers" in Kurdish. The Education Ministry has asked that schools not to allow their students to participate in protests. A website sponsored by KanalTurk is calling for citizens to gather in downtown Ankara October 27 to condemn terrorism. Turkish National Police expect thousands to participate. The "Socialist Platform of the Oppressed" announced it would hold a major rally in Ankara on November 3 to protest against rising chauvinism and fascism.

Mission Security Remains Unchanged

¶9. (SBU) Occasional, informal protests in front of the Mission facilities continue. The Anatolian Youth Foundation will issue a press statement at 1330 today outside the Consulate in Istanbul. We have no specific information regarding additional demonstrations, but expect spontaneous demonstrations to continue today and possibly through the weekend. Turkish National Police continue to provide supplemental security support at all mission facilities.

Visit Ankara's Classified Web Site at
<http://www.state.sg.gov/p/eur/ankara/>

WILSON